Christmas Guests

And Other Poems

Robert A. Chesebrough

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Will I need you? No, I thank you, naught else I need to-night.

—Christmas Guests, page 7.

CHRISTMAS GUESTS

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

ROBERT A. CHESEBROUGH

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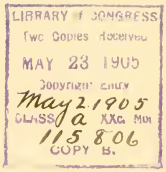

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ROBERT A. CHESEBROUGH

a.m.p. June 15, 1921

TO

MARGARET WOODHULL DAVISON

THIS VOLUME

IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

BY HER

GRANDFATHER

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Enter freely—Merry Christmas! Will you take chairs or stand?

—Christmas Guests, page 9.

CHRISTMAS GUESTS

MERRY CHRISTMAS? Thank you, yes! I knew 'twas Christmas Eve,
And I wish you Merry Christmas! and I would I could believe
'Twas as merry as I wished it, for us all, as well as you;
For all the world as merry as for the favored few.
But I beg that you will leave me; go out and shut the door;
Don't mind me if I lock it, for I wish to ponder o'er
The many merry Christmases which, gliding down the years,
Have brought their shares of joy and grief, of laughter and of tears.

Will I need you? No, I thank you, naught else I need to-night
But the favor of your absence; as you go, put out the light.

Is any one expected? No one you'd care to
greet;
My guests are mine—mine only—not those
whom you should meet.
How will they enter? ask you. Well, in truth,
I do not know;
But all the same they'll be here, so you need not
wait below:
I have told you all I mean to, so let nothing more
be said;
Don't stand there idly prating, but please leave
and go to bed.

At last, alone with silence in the glimmer of the
fire,
And with throbbing thoughts of visions which
will neither cease nor tire:
On this Merry Christmas evening, I am waiting
in the gloom
For the spectral guests I've bidden to the hearth-
stone of my room.
Coming, are you? Yes! I know it, for I feel
my heart stand still.
And the air which wafts your presence thro'
my pulses sends a chill:

Who loved to roam on horseback 'midst the whispers of the night.

—Christmas Guests, page 10.

By your leave I'll draw up closer to the embers
of my fire;
Don't think it's fear that moves me, or that I
dread your ire.

Enter freely—Merry Christmas! Will you take
chairs or stand?
I know little of the courtesies which rule the
spirit land;
But, pardon my abruptness, you are welcome,
let's to work;
You are not here for nothing, and I nothing
mean to shirk.
Don't spare me, I can bear it, whatever you re-
veal;
And memory shall separate the shadow from the
real.
Your ghostships I will recognize, of that you
need not fear;
My heart, perchance, may bleed afresh, but eyes
shall shed no tear.

Do I know you, youthful image? 'Tis a form
I once did bear,
With limbs full strong with vigor, and a shock
of curly hair,

And a soul as white as paper, free from seams
of sin and woe;
Do you come here to upbraid me with forty years
ago?
And your neighbor? He's the fellow who
thought the world was bright;
Who loved to roam on horseback 'midst the whis-
pers of the night,
And to watch the waves by moonlight, on a still
and starlit shore,
Thrilling with a wild desire for wealth and fame
and lore.

Yes! I see you also, standing close by the chan-
cel rail,
A fair, sweet form beside you, on her head a
bridal veil:
And the sunshine slanting downwards from the
frescoed dome o'erhead,
Seemed to augur joyful promise for the vows
which then were said.
Don't taunt me with that mirage; she is dead,
and on the wall
Hangs her picture, and the horror of her dying
I recall

Yes! I see you also, standing close by the chancel rail.

—Christmas Guests, page 10.

With a sense of mortal anguish, which fiends might laugh to view;
But my brain, I think, was iron, and so it pulled me through.

Come from that darkened corner! You're the imp who in my ear
For thirty years has whispered, with feverish lips of fear,
" That the thing to get was money," the stuff that men most prize;
Don't think I'm longer blinded by the glamour of your lies.
For you're a mighty liar: and the thing to keep is health,
And it has a value greater than all your boasted wealth:
And another one is honor, and some more are truth and right:
I can hardly bear your presence amongst my guests to-night.

But I listened to your whispers, and I toiled both night and day;
And I trampled down the obstacles which always blocked the way.

Did I spare myself? you're asking.—Well, no;
not much, I guess;
And so I've won the vantage which the world
has deemed success.
Adding more to more with eagerness and avari-
cious looks;
Fingering piles of dirty money, adding figures
up in books,
Till the brain turns sick and giddy, and is weary
of the whole.
'Tis a fine and lofty business for an immortal
soul!

Yet the iron chain of habit will enclose you as a
cloak;
As a sponge half filled with water, tho' it ooze
it still will soak:
You are fastened in the meshes of a web which
will not loose;
No longer are you master, and no longer can
you choose.
'Tis as tho' you'd live forever, and there was no
death to blight,
Or if there was, you recked not, for it was not
yet in sight,

Fingering piles of dirty money, adding figures up in books.

—Christmas Guests, page 12.

Learning nothing from the warnings which are
writ on every side,
Till you're dead as Julius Cæsar, and swept out-
ward by the tide.

Still, I've dreamed of something higher, what it
is I do not know,
But I know its genius touched me, for I felt its
lambent glow
Just a moment, then it flitted, then it left me in
the gloom,
Sliding backwards, gliding downwards, as one
drowning, to his doom.
And then groping in the blackness, dazed and
'wildered by a flame
Which dazzled from a distance, thro' an ebon
darkness came;
Far beyond all reach and compass, seeming only
meant to taunt,
Neither heart, nor tongue, nor reason giving an-
swer to my want.

As threads of lightning glimmer 'midst a sum-
mer evening sky,
As flashes from the firefly flare up and quickly
die,

As trains of splendor follow in the shooting
meteor's wake,
As a pebble splashes falling on the bosom of the
lake:
So—my soul is stirred within me by immortal
whispers deep,
I do not know the language, nor its meanings
cannot keep;
As I strive to grasp and hold them, they are fled;
and everywhere
Seems a chaos which is empty, into which I
vainly stare.

But who are ye who cluster in my tapestry
beyond?
White faces rising dimly, like lilies from a
pond:
Why, you're an army almost, a motley vast
array,
Pleading dumbly; it is useless, I would know
you any day.
No need of false pretences, you're a pack of
vain regrets,
Spinning backwards down a lifetime, deaf to
prayers and tears and threats;

But who are ye who cluster in my tapestry beyond?

—Christmas Guests, page 14.

And those silent spectres yonder, standing over by my door,
Pouring something from weird goblets on the carpet of my floor.

—Christmas Guests, page 15.

What's the use of dealing with you?—it is profitless, too late;
All the power of all the demons cannot mend the webs of fate.

And those silent spectres yonder, standing over by my door,
Pouring something from weird goblets on the carpet of my floor;
Eyes staring in meek wonder, clad in robes of many hues;
Your absence from this meeting I would willingly excuse.
For you're the good intentions who doth follow one thro' life,
Meaning always to act nobly, always failing in the strife;
And the thing you pour is Nepenthe; ah, yes, I know it well,
'Tis the liquid which doth saturate the paving-stones of Hell.

And the weird and vagrant shadows in the corner of my room,
Like unto giant serpents, wrestling fiercely in the gloom;

Writhing, tearing in still fury, rearing high their horrid crests,
Why, it almost sets me laughing to think such should be my guests.
Evil passions! Yes, they're legion, and they come forsooth, unbid,
And he's a doughty hero who can fasten down the lid
Of the seething vat which pours them o'er the pavement of his path:
He must either be their victor or the victim of their wrath.

Yon giant in his armor broken, shattered, bent and stained,
With his lordly plume bedraggled, tells of triumphs past and waned;
And his rusted sword scarce hanging in a scabbard, ragged, worn,
Is the type of dead ambition, ended, wasted, lost, forlorn.
And the transient shapes of vision sailing by me on the wall,
Mocking at me in derision, yes! I recollect ye all

Yon giant in his armor broken, shattered, bent and stained,
With his lordly plume bedraggled, tells of triumphs past and waned.

—Christmas Guests, page 16.

And the woman clothed in sable, standing silent over there,
Pointing at me with thin finger, glaring at me with fixed stare.

—Christmas Guests, page 17.

For the lost illusions fleeting by forever from
my brain,
Yet I trusted in and loved ye, but believed in
ye in vain.

And the woman clothed in sable, standing silent
over there,
Pointing at me with thin finger, glaring at me
with fixed stare;
Let her speak her errand freely, why comes she
here to-night,
On this Merry Christmas evening, this good
company to blight,
With her wan, reproachful figure—what have I
with her to do?
You say "She typifies remorse, is pointing
straight at you."
At me? a man of honor, whose word is good as
gold;
Whom people laud with justice: I forgot, the
room is cold.

I was posing; I admit it—for the moment I for-
got
That spirit eyes could penetrate, develop every
blot;

Could tear to shreds the raiment which to the
world seems fair,
And leave us standing naked, for the hypocrites
we are.
She is therefore rightly present; it is well she
came to-night;
Altho' she wring my heart out, I will endure the
sight,
Bowing meekly in her presence, firmly stifling
every groan:
Who dares her lurid bosom, takes her later to his
own.

Is most of life a pretence, and honor only
sham?
Position, wealth and power merely screens to
hide the man—
To cover up his defects, and make the surface
bear
The semblance of the virtues which he arrogates
to wear?
Are critics' eyes less searching than his own
which reach within?
Are men but sycophants at heart, who recognize
no sin

And the little crowd behind me? Good deeds! you say, are they.

—Christmas Guests, page 19.

But that which stalks in flagrance, red-handed in the light;
And ignore that which may exist, because not plain in sight?

And the little crowd behind me? Good deeds! you say, are they.
Well, I wish that it was larger; and I hope some Christmas Day
That my room will scarcely hold it, so there'll be no space for you,
For I grieve to say I've not enjoyed this Christmas interview.
But I'm weary of your presence, I've had enough to-night.
Pleasant spectres, Merry Christmas! Now please leave me and take flight—
Leave me plotting in the darkness, how to live that, when 'tis o'er,
Life was not wholly wasted—but than evil good was more.

Vanished! Are ye? Merry Christmas! there is vacancy once more
In the precincts of my chamber, and my festival galore,

It is ended.—Am I dreaming? Why, I thought
I was alone;
You, unlike the other phantoms, are to me at
least unknown.
I am not good at guessing. State your pur-
pose and your name:
Why, you wear a crown of fire, and your gar-
ments bathed in flame:
Why, your presence weighs upon me and withers
up my breath:
Now I know you,—Merry Christmas; thou art
welcome, mighty Death!

Farewell to Merry Christmas! farewell to Time
and Earth!
I'm leaving for the shadowy land where Christ-
mas child had birth;
To probe its starry firmament, to solve its un-
known field;
To tear its mysteries apart, its wonders all re-
vealed:
To rise from earth to spirit form, to face the
light of day,
The garb of flesh, its ills and wants, forever
swept away:

Death!

—Christmas Guests, page 20.

To wander 'midst the spheres of space.—Regret
it? No! not I,
For death the ladder is to life, and living is to
die.

Or else—to rest forever in a long, unbroken
sleep,
Thro' the years and down the ages, in a slumber
vast and deep:
Unruffled by a murmur, or the effort of a dream;
Of thought or self no remnant left, of conscious-
ness no gleam:
While time goes toiling onwards, and the moun-
tains and the sea
Destroy and build for myriads, who are yet to
die and be:
This were a paradise most blest, a bourne of ease
and bliss:
What creed affords such certain rest, what
Heaven can equal this?

WHY I LOVE MY LOVE

LOVE my love because she is my love.
What need of other reason how or why?
This only know I, that she is my love:
I could not tell you more if I should try.

It may be that she is not quite so fair
As other maids have been to other eyes.
But what of that to me?—she is my love,
And in that spell her total glory lies.

What if her eyes are brown, and into mine
Gaze with the tranquil light of faith and trust?
She doeth this because she is my love,
And, loving me, she doeth what she must.

The air seems perfumed when my love draws nigh,
The day seems fairer when she passeth near,
Her touch is gentle as the zephyr's sigh,
Her voice to me is music of the sphere.

I love the ground her little feet step on,
  I love the rustle of her simple gown,
I love the flowers she loves to look upon,
  I love my love, and she is my renown.

I love the day because she nearer seems;
  I love her most at morn, at noon, at eve;
I love the night because she comes in dreams,
  And fills with joy the slumbrous air I breathe.

If words were hymns, and all the tunes of song
  Were mingled in one anthem rich and rare,
No age would me suffice, however long,
  To lay the rapture of my passion bare.

What would you else? I have no more to tell.
  Mere eloquence of tongue seems poor and vain:
I love my love, and in that potent spell
  Are soul and body wrapped, and heart and brain.

LOST PEARLS

HOU hast left it too long, it is ebbing away
In the mad strife for money; its power and sway,

Unregarded, unnourished, unwept and unsung,
Have perished with youth, and the strength of the young.

No longer the visions, the beauties of mind,
Which swept by thee in legions, in hues of all kind,

Weird fragments of color, rare tableaux of light—
No longer they sway thee, but only a blight

On the will and the soul settles down with a pall,
A paresis of effort which buries it all.

Oh, wasted ambition! Oh, groveller in earth!
But a tithe of the vigor for things which are worth

All the toil thou hast wasted on nothings and gold
Might have made thee a being of different mould.

But vain are regrets at the zenith of power,
To seize at their birth the wild thoughts of the hour,

To clothe them in color, to deck them in rhyme:
Once let them escape, they are gone for all time.

Well, long mayest thou dawdle with paper and pen,
Waiting idly for muses which ne'er come again.

Ah! fool, canst not see that the wealth of thy brain
By Time's brand and thy vanishing youth has been slain.

Strike, then, while the iron is hot in thy vein,
Strike instant and ever, again and again,

Ere the rust and the mildew have tarnished its sheen,
And the fibres of action no longer are keen.

More pearls in the sea lie entombed and unborn
Than the gems which are saved—from its bosom are torn.

A VISION

BEHELD a lofty mountain lifting to
the farthest sky,
And upon its utmost crest, wreathed
in clouds of brilliancy—
There, a golden palace stood, builded by immortal hands;
And the lustre of its glory spread o'er all the distant lands.
Glowing with a clear effulgence, and a mild and holy light;
Thro' the sunshine of the morning, and the blackness of the night.
Then I heard faint music swelling, over all the land and sea;
E'en to earth's remotest dwelling, bearing sweetest melody.

All the peoples of the nations, upward bent their yearning gaze;
Upward, toward the golden palace, and toward the devious ways

Winding on the lofty mountain, round and
round in various lines,
Paths, and zigzag roads, and thickets scattered
o'er its vast confines:
And there seemed a countless number, pressing
on with toiling feet,
Up the painful pathways climbing, o'er the rock
and up the steep;
There I saw the hardy yeoman, priest and lay-
man, maidens mild;
Many a fainting, weary woman, and the mother
with her child.

And it seemed that all the pathways leading to
the mountain's crest
Were intricate and wearisome, with scarce a
place to rest:
While many a broad and noble road, with shaded
nooks and trees,
Branched downward from the stony paths to
those of pleasant ease.
And of the countless multitude, who on the glori-
ous shrine
Had fixed their longing eyes at first, with con-
stancy divine,

It seemed as tho' a little band, of all that host remained,
Which neared the mountain's topmost land, the golden palace gained.

And all the rest of that vast throng, lured by the love of ease,
Or by some tempting view, which served their wayward souls to please,
Forgetful of the golden shrine, now hidden from their sight,
Had missed their way, and wandered o'er the mountain's dizzy height.
Adown some darkling precipice, unwary ones were hurled;
While some retraced their steps again, regretful of the world:
Unheard the glorious melody which, with celestial air,
Still floated through the canopy, and lingered everywhere.

And evening came, and twilight had bathed the mountain's crest
In a robe of crimson splendor; and the sun was in the west

Slowly falling; yet the warning, all unheeded,
on them fell,
As though some evil spirit had o'er them cast its
spell.
And darkness drew its mantle, and then the
gates of gold
Were sadly closed, and blackness dropt down its
sable fold;
And as the door shut swinging, passed the
Vision from my eyes,
And fainter grew the singing, till lost within the
skies.

A REVERIE

NOW the hours of light are ending,
And the slowly setting sun,
With the sky its glory blending,
Signals that the day is done.
Wave on wave in crimson legions,
Bank on bank of azure light,
Pathways to the heavenly regions,
Day coquetting with the night.

Sadness o'er my spirit stealing,
Mingled with a strange delight,
To my soul a glimpse revealing,
Joyous, painful, sad yet bright;
Earth before my window fading
Into nothing; one fixed glance
Chains my fancy, leads me wading
Thro' a weird, delicious trance.

Sombre hues are swiftly changing,
Gold and purple strands of light;
Giant clouds, like armies ranging,
Sweep their glories from my sight.

Twilight coming, slowly, surely
Turns the golden vision gray;
Darkness falling fast, securely
Wraps her mantle round the day.

Now the lamps of heaven are lighted
By unseen seraphic hands,
Beacons for the souls benighted,
Roaming in those trackless strands;
Spirits from the distant heaven,
Never wearied in their flight;
And perchance to them is given
Knowledge hidden from our sight.

Backward down the path of ages
Runs a train, a countless one,
Of unlearned men and wisest sages,
Watching, with faint hearts, the sun
Sinking in its bed of splendor,
Wondering what the mystery meant;
If the future state should render
All its meanings, and extent.

Working out in short probation,
Tangled skeins of earth and life;
Deeds of sin, the pomp of station,
Cruel acts of selfish strife.

Souls of those who once were mortal,
Sons of toil and slaves of sin,
Waiting, till the deathly portal
Yawned at last and drew them in.

For a brief and fleeting hour
Standing on the shore of time,
Till the wave's resistless power
Sweeps them past the border line;
Like a billow of the ocean,
Rising with a crest of foam,
Grand and beautiful in motion,
Breaks, recedes, and then is gone.

So our lives go, following after
Each the other's even tread;
Rising, cresting, breaks in laughter,
Foams in rage, and then is dead;
Leaving naught to trace its being
In the grasping undertow:
Weary are the eyes at seeing
Still that everlasting flow.

From the passing cycles gleaning
Scraps of knowledge, flakes of gold;
All the total, nothing seeming
To the centuries of old.

Arts forgotten, science hurried
To its doom, but at its birth:
Swept away, and quickly buried
In the all-consuming earth.

Delving deeply, later ages
Raise a mouldy stone to light,
Aim to read its defaced pages,
And restore its form aright;
On a pedestal erected
In some Louvre, perchance, is stood,
There to stare and be inspected
By the gaping multitude.

Spectre of a nation vanished,
Phantom of a rude o'erwhelm;
Ghost of ages dead and banished,
Mocker of a ruined realm;
Typical of æons fleeting,
Mighty mimic, grim and vast;
Telling how the earth is eating
Up the baubles of the past.

Science tells of earthly matter,
Naught is ever wholly lost,
Tho' its atoms widely scatter,
In tumultuous changes tost;

Somewhere in the vast creation
Will be found each minute grain;
Changed in form, remote in station,
Still, the total bulk the same.

And the learned sage will show you
God is only nature's power;
With a soul he will endow you,
Fleeting as this twilight hour;
Transient as the meteor's flight
Shooting past the watcher's eye;
Flashing with a moment's light,
Buried in a midnight sky.

From the seething, cooling masses,
Tells us: "comes the finished earth,"
Rock and metal by their gases,
Through a spectroscope: "their birth."
And the feeble life beginning,
Teems ere long thro' all the realm;
That, evolution always winning,
Upward tends, and guides the helm.

Ever changing, ever rising,
From the monad to the ape;
Each improving form revising,
Yields at last the human shape:

And as need demands new uses,
  Grafts them on the former kind;
Striding o'er the worn abuses,
  Instinct turns at last to mind.

Is that mind pulsating slowly,
  Symbol of an august reign,
Only yeast, which filters wholly
  Thro' a dull gray mass of brain?
Lighting up the moorland dreary
  With the glimmer of its light:
Startled by the effort, weary,
  Flickers out into the night.

Man at heart is but a savage,
  Varnished with a thin veneer,
Freed from all restraint, would ravage;
  Checked by pride, and ruled by fear:
Instincts from his ape ancestor
  Linger yet within his frame;
Masquerading as a Nestor,
  Baboon still, except in name.

Equal of the beasts which perish,
  Greater only in degree,
What are worth, the things we cherish,
  Honor, truth, and dignity?

What—the use of toiling, striving?
What—the need of end or aim?
Is a perfect life worth living
If there's only left a name?

Can the day, the sun forgetting,
Independent radiance claim?
What the diamond to the setting,
What the lamp is to the flame;
So—the body to the spirit,
Is the shell which holds the pearl:
Shall clay eternity inherit,
And spirit vanish in a whirl?

Is the value of the casket
Greater than the gleaming gem?
Is the perfume of the basket
Sweeter than the flowers within?
Shall the body live forever,
And the soul forever die?
And shall matter, ending never,
Gain o'er mind the mastery?

Fool! the mighty power which made thee,
Lit the spark of life within,
Is so great, so far beyond thee,
That the mind can ne'er begin

To grasp the raiment of its grandeur,
Guess the problem of its birth;
Look! the stars that round me wander
Mock the littleness of earth.

Aye! that priceless earth, thy dwelling,
Adds to the whole an atom more;
The might of God's creation swelling,
As counts a sand upon the shore.
What, then, is thy weak opinion?
Whence this vain and empty pride?
See! the driftwood of the ocean
Goes out with the ebbing tide.

In the dim horizon fading,
Out beyond the feeble sight;
Each returning wave evading,
Sucked into the endless night;
On the trackless waters floating,
Sinks at last beneath the wave;
While remorseless time is gloating
O'er the conquest he hath made.

Is the tale of man's redemption,
Terrors of the judgment-seat,
A Saviour's loving intervention,
Only fiction and deceit?

That, the Christian's fond endeavor,
His hope to gain the promised view,
Merely dreams, which fade forever?
Then, oh! then, is nothing true.

Vain the work of swindled ages,
False the prophets and the seers;
False the lore of saints and sages,
Vain the martyr's holy tears;
Shattered is the sweet illusion,
Lost the faith which looks on high;
Life—the merest weak delusion,
Immortality a lie.

After centuries of error,
Too late the scheme to be revis't;
Man, awakening from his terror,
Tramples on the throne of Christ.
Nothing, then, is worth the knowing,
All attempts to build are vain;
Futile, planting seed and sowing:
Chaos has returned again.

Useless is the gentle Saviour,
Stripped of His divinity;
Patience, love and meek behavior
Cannot make a God for thee.

Down the ponderous structures rattle,
Falls the arch without the key;
Might as well give up the battle,
From the worthless rubbish flee.

Oh! could one sure sign be given,
Bring conviction to the mind;
Proving that the God of Heaven
Is not stone, nor deaf, nor blind;
Coming from the silent stars,
Wiping all the mystery out;
Rend the everlasting bars,
Banish every torturing doubt.

Day and night succeed each other,
Months and years sweep quickly by;
Aeons pile on one another,
While the Earth rolls down the sky.
Factions war, and rend and rage,
Build a fabric from a crumb;
Adding creeds from age to age,
Still the silent stars are dumb.

Faith alone, O doubting mortal,
Only faith can pierce the scroll
Which obscures the mighty portal;
Up the envious curtains roll.

Trust not to the strength of reason,
'Twill crumble as a tower of sand,
Deluding for a transient season;
Faith alone yields solid land.

Cling to that with fond endeavor,
Be thy creed whate'er it may;
Forms and dogmas pass forever,
With the coming light of day.
Strip't from man's poor weak invention,
Mighty truth alone shall rise,
With a glorious ascension,
And illuminate the skies.

Burning out the dross of ages,
From the pure refinèd gold;
Blotting from the bigot pages,
Hoary lies too long enrolled.
Rive the chains which strongly bound ye,
Sweep the mists from off the land:
And as morning breaks around ye,
See the Rock of Ages stand.

Aye! and it shall stand forever,
Fiercely tho' the torrents run,
Like a wild, tumultuous river,
And the clouds obscure the sun.

Bravely, tho' the wave breaks o'er it,
It shall rear its crest on high;
Future millions shall adore it:
Man, infallibly, shall die.

Priestly rule, which led the masses
In a maze of 'wildering doubt;
Blindly blocked the easy passes,
Blew the lights of science out.
Trod upon the knowledge dawning,
Burnt its heralds at the stake;
Grieved to see the light of morning
O'er the Earth triumphant break.

Ruled the world with rod of iron,
Gave the conscience for mankind;
To the tiger and the lion
Flung the independent mind.
Made the law for a Creator,
Steeped in self-idolatry;
Truth, the final expiator,
Lives eternal as yon sky.

Claiming all, yet knowing nothing,
Selling pardons for a price;
War and strife and discord sowing,
Stifling virtue, lauding vice.

In its ignorance presuming
Power over all the sod;
And with arrogance assuming
The omnipotence of God.

Think you, that in all these horrors,
Cruelties and blood and pain;
That the peaceful "Man of Sorrows"
Can recognize his work or reign?
Fire and death and wreck of nation,
Over all its flag to flount;
Are these the things to claim relation
From the Sermon on the Mount?

Incense making dense the air,
Purple vestments, cloth of gold;
Music floating rich and rare,
Solemn chant through arches rolled;
Costly temples, gilded dome,
Steeples wrestling with the sky;
Altars wrought in brass and stone,
These—in praise of Calvary.

When the centuries have hurried,
A new cycle towards the last;
When the coming age has buried
All the rubbish of the past;

Then shall Earth, revived, awakened,
Find the truth, and break the seal;
And wisdom's path anew re-takened,
Separate the false from real.

Shattered all the idols cherished,
Kings and tyrants swept away;
Rising from its ashes perished,
Breaks a new and better day:
Joy for man, and morn for nation,
Night no longer rules the Earth;
Solved, the problem of creation,
Proved, the reason for its birth.

Broken, all the bonds of labor,
Riven, all the chains of mind;
Humanity towards one's neighbor
The highest duty of mankind.
Stilled, the strife and wars of faction,
Quenched, the feverish thirst for gold;
Life, a field for thought and action:
Fires of superstition cold.

Harmless all the powers of evil,
Fabled hell and Papal ban;
Silenced, the malignant Devil,
Freed from chains, the soul of man.

Soaring from its *débris* higher,
Toppling heights unreached before;
Wresting off its dross entire,
Sweeping through the golden door.

When the judgment books are opened,
And a world awaits its doom;
When the dread decree is spoken,
Creeds and cant will find no room.
Righteous acts will fill the measure,
Words prove cheap, professions stale;
Works alone will count as treasure,
Deeds, not prayers, will there avail.

Who art thou, O wondrous stranger,
Cleaving space with giant stride?
Is some ruined world in danger,
Hath its Lord been crucified?
Is its day of judgment dawning?
Must it kiss the fiery rod?
Art thou speeding without warning,
The executioner of God?

Earthward sweeping—comet is it,
Ploughing through the azure vault,
Paying stars a fiery visit,
Never knowing rest nor halt;

Trailing onward, stopping never,
Suns and systems speeding by;
Trails of splendor dropping ever,
Thou, knight-errant of the sky.

From the awful depths of ether,
Rushing with the lightning's pace;
Rule, nor order, knowing neither,
Foe to all the laws of space.
Weird the train which follows after,
What thine errand, gay or sad?
Thou mightst move the stars to laughter,
Thinking thee a sphere gone mad.

Only thou canst reach the station,
Of the farthest stars of all;
Probe the limits of creation,
Plunge against the final wall.
Find where ends the great beginning,
Where begins what ends no more;
What the power which hurls thee spinning
On through space for evermore.

Where the cosmic dust is sifting,
Building world and satellite;
Where a million suns are drifting
In the awful infinite;

Aghast, the scope of mortal vision,
Ages counting as a span;
Mocking, as in sheer derision,
The vast egotism of man.

Microbe of a genus, atom,
Globule on a tiny earth,
Product of a strange erratum,
Offspring of disputed birth;
This, the ant, whose sage opinion
Would dominate eternity:
Penetrate the grand dominion,
Of the everlasting sky.

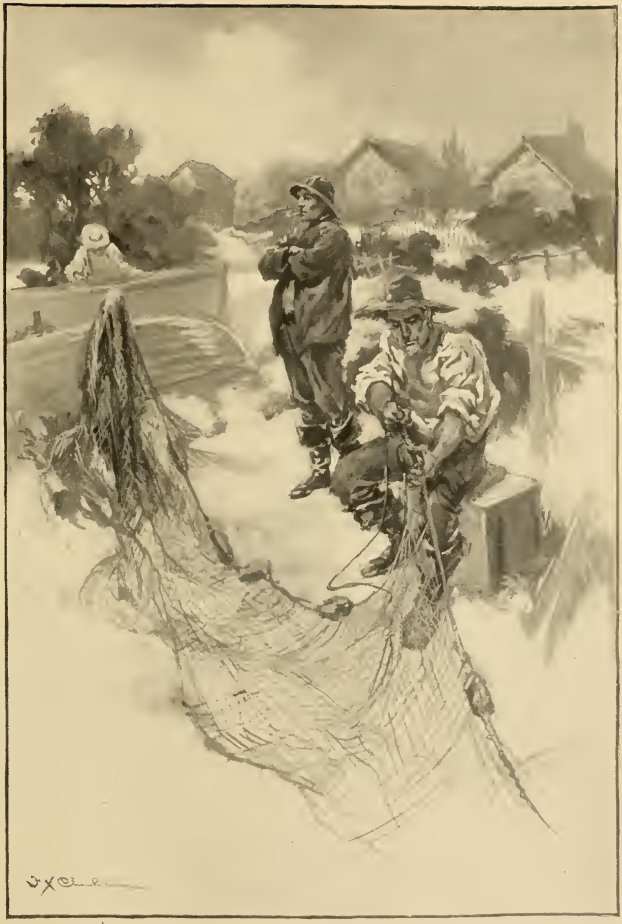
Yes, I'm coming. Are you calling?
Have I sat here all the night,
Thro' the links of fancy falling,
Reckless of the dawning light?
Are the little ones still sleeping?
Dear, I did not know 'twas day:
Surely you have not been weeping?
Fades my Reverie away.

AN IDYL OF SEABRIGHT *

EYOND the Narrows, straight down the Bay,
From the city, a score of miles away,
There's a strip of sand, which bars the sea
From the silver river of Shrewsbury.
Above it, twin beacons of Neversink rise
On the crest of the Highlands, glad'ning the eyes
Of the mariner, home on the bosom borne
Of an angry sea, on a night of storm.

Scarcely a furlong is the land wide,
Washed is its yellow sand by the tide;
Gleaming it lies 'neath the noonday sun,
Glist'ning and cool when the day is done;
But oft, when the tide is at its height,
And the wind ariseth in its might;
The restless billows leap the shore,
And into the peaceful river pour.

* This is a true story, occurring at Galilee, Seabright, and was described in the New York *Sun* many years ago.



But down the beach, 'midst the sandy ruts,
Rises a group of fishermen's huts.

—An Idyl of Seabright, page 19.

Built on this narrow strip of sand,
The picturesque dwellings of Seabright stand.
The summer homes of the rich are here;
Thronged is the beach when the sky is clear;
Idly the crowd in the breakers lave;
Cool is the kiss of the splashing wave;
Away to the south doth the ocean roll,
Unchecked, till it lashes the southern pole.

But down the beach, 'midst the sandy ruts,
Rises a group of fishermen's huts;
Paved is its single street with shells,
Rank with the odor of fish it smells.
Hardy the race who sojourn there;
Homely and coarse the clothes they wear;
But brave and strong, as men must be,
Who gather their bread from the mighty sea.

Just as the sun from the ocean shrank,
Teddy and old Comstock and Frank,
Out from the beach their surf boat staunch,
Safe through the rolling breakers launch.
Many a fisherman shook his head,
For the sky with clouds was overspread;
Yet food must be won, and tears must be shed,
The first for the living, the last for the dead.

In with the oars, and up with the sail,
Plenty of time, ere riseth the gale;
While the storm gathers, "we'll fish 'midst the lull,"
Who cares for the warning cry of the gull?
A harvest of fish to land on the beach,
A tribute of praise to the courage of each;
The boat is as staunch as the hearts of its crew;
And fear is for them to whom danger is new.

Down with the sail and over the lead,
Swiftly it dives to its sandy bed;
Fish after fish come over the side,
Light are the fishermen's hearts with pride.
Beware! for the sun has veiled its light,
The seas are growing and capped with white;
Now, the gale breaks with a sudden roar;
"Boys, it is time to make for the shore."

"Frank! cut loose the lead with your knife;
To your oars, Teddy, and pull for your life!"
Old Comstock shouts above the gale,
Unsteps the mast, with its flapping sail,
Into the ocean flings sail and mast:
For both are useless before the blast.

Bravely they toil at the bending oar,
Around them the sea gulls pivot and soar.

—An Idyl of Seabright, page 51.

Released—the boat glides on through the sea,
Urged by both wind and wave on the lee.

Bravely they toil at the bending oar,
Around them the sea gulls pivot and soar;
Fainting their hearts, and their sinews worn,
Behind them follows the pitiless storm.
Right through the breakers, their only path;
Foaming and raging wild, in their wrath:
A big black wave takes a hand in the strife,
And the fishers are fighting with death for life.

Visions of loved ones, a glimpse of home,
A gasping for breath, and a battle with foam;
Tossed on a breaker, close to the shore,
Sucked out again in the undertow's maw;
Despairing, the glance which is caught of the sky,
On the crest of a sea, then drawn back to die;
With the foam for a shroud, and the sea for a grave:
'Midst the rush of the water, the swash of the wave.

To-morrow—the skies will have cleared, and
then,
To-morrow—the boats will go out again;
To-morrow—the sea will be smooth and calm;
To-morrow—forgotten its power to harm.
The grief of the hamlet will pass away soon,
And the men will be fishing again at noon;
For food must be won, and tears must be shed:
The first for the living, the last for the dead.

MY MAUD, MY MARGUERITE

Y Maud, my Marguerite!
My little dove,
So eloquently sweet
And fair. Thy love
Is more to me
Than life or gain
Can ever be.
Thy gentle name
Fills up my life,
And bids me seek
My lasting joy in thee,
My Marguerite.

My Maud, my Marguerite!
Upon thy brow
Sit Truth and Purity
As white as snow.
Thy gentle voice,
That darling little hand:
No maid so fair
In all the land.

To live for thee,
  This life were sweet,
My darling Maud,
  My Marguerite.

My Maud, my Marguerite!
  Both joys and pain,
May welcome come,
  If not in vain:
My trust, my hope,
  Are strong in thee,
Nor Time revoke
  Their constancy.
Thy joys all mine,
  And mine thy grief;
My own dear Maud,
  My Marguerite.

"ALL IS VANITY, SAITH THE PREACHER"

LL things are Vanity, earth cannot give
The joys we seek after, and for which we live;
The future but promises hope, which proves vain,
And when present it yields us but sorrow and pain.

The silver-lined cloud, which floats calmly above,
And seems a bright Eden of bliss and of love,
Is a vapory mist, which deceives but the eye,
And changing its outline is lost in the sky.

The love which you sought, and which promised to prove
A bliss which Death only could ever remove,
Though sweet, is so mingled with sorrow and care,
As to lose the clear halo it first seemed to wear.

The dreams which you dreamt, from your earliest days,
Of successes and triumphs, the golden-hued rays
Of a glorious manhood, how have they been met?
And years creeping on find you dreaming them yet.

The gold which you toiled for, perchance may have won;
Does it bring you the joys you once thought 'twould have done?
Is the taste of its splendor as sweet to the lip
As you dreamed 'twould have been when you struggled for it?

The chalice of bliss, which at last you have gained,
You have tasted the dregs ere its contents are drained;
The roses of youth, they have vanished, have fled,
And shrinking to ashes, lie withered and dead.

The conqueror's wreath, the bright garland of fame,
'Twas to deck thy young brow with a glorious name;

Oh! how has it faded, that dream of thy life:
Its heritance bitterness, mockery, strife.

All things are vanity: Heaven alone
Gives hope of a life which shall fully atone
For the vain disappointments which follow us here.
Have faith, for the wealth of the grain is the sear.

LUXOR

GAZE thou in yonder glass,
Look deep into the lineaments
Which, searèd by the lines
That scar their visage, tell
Of thoughts and acts embosomed there
Which thou alone canst judge.
Then turn and face the world,
And ape unsullied attitude,
Image of all that men admire.
Blush not, there is no wizard glass
To penetrate the soul; 'tis God alone
Can write thee as thou art,
And hurl thee from thy lofty virtue.
Has age brought surcease of thyself
And sponged away the clouds of ink,
The blots which soiled life's pages?
Lives there yet he for whom repentance
Hath no place, then mark him down
As one for whom Christ died not—
The hypocrite who has no need of heaven,
Who was not born in sin.

It does not need to blaze
Thy misdeeds to the world,
Nor mouth them to the church;
But seek not to deceive thyself,
And when thy brother's crimes
Rush hot to men and Heaven,
Join not in hue and cry,
But draw sweet charity's mantle
Round him, and stone him not.
Of all men born into this world
But only one was sinless:
Be sure thou art not He.

WHY LOVE IS BLIND

N ev'ry age, in ev'ry clime,
Where streamlets stray or bright stars shine,
Have dreamers writ, and poets sung,
Of Love, the beautiful,—the young.

They paint him as a truant boy,
With wings of light, and face of joy,
With bounding step and voice as clear
As ever spake in maiden's ear.

With bow and quiver in his hand,
He wandered over ev'ry land,
And shot his darts with careless glee,
Or e'en one thought of sympathy.

Woe to the luckless swain or maid,
Across whose path our "young Love" strayed.
Quick flew the shaft, the deed was done,
Smiles changed to sighs, and peace was gone.

Now, Jove, who for a good long while,
Had watched the urchin with a smile,
Began to think the time had come
To put an end to poor Love's fun.

Before the Throne, with downcast eye,
Our hero stood dejectedly;
The mandate harsh and stern he heard,
Yet Love, he uttered not one word.

His golden bow was in his hand,
And on it lay a wingèd brand;
Thought Love, " I'll quickly answer you,"
And, quick as thought, the answer flew.

Jove saw the act, and turned aside,
The missile from its mark flew wide;
Else, in the realm Love first had been
The conqueror of gods and men.

Dismayed he stood, and pale with fright,
His ruby lips turned ashen white,
And he who never pity knew,
With tears for mercy dared to sue.

Then Beauty, at the feet of Jove,
Added her tears to those of Love,
And Jove could stand, no more than I,
Youth, Love and Beauty's tearful eye.

'Twas, therefore, left for Love to choose
Whether he would his eyesight lose,
Or, from the world forever sent,
Doomed be to lasting banishment.

Love chose the first, and to this day,
Though blind, on earth he wings his way,
More dauntless, reckless than before,
A tyrant now, and evermore.

À L'AIDE, MON ROI

In ancient days Harold was King of France, and was known as the champion of all the poor and oppressed in his kingdom. To call upon the king was to invoke aid and speedy justice. "À l'aide, mon Roi," was the popular cry which spread throughout the whole kingdom, until it became the faith of the peasants, and was never uttered in vain at the foot of the throne.

KING HAROLD sat on his regal throne,
For Harold was king of the realm alone;
Dispensing right to rich and poor,
To noble knight and lowly boor.

Whene'er his ear heard the earnest plead,
Of serf oppressed by baron's greed;
The king responded to the call,
And measured justice out to all.

Thus, each sad tale and feeble moan
Was told at the foot of that royal throne;
The power of might was powerless there,
For Harold could strike, as well as spare.

And so, throughout the realm, his name
The watchword of the poor became.
" Harold, mon roi; à l'aide, à l'aide! "
Was the peasant's constant cry for aid.

Until at last it seemed to ring
Through all the land; " À l'aide, my king,"
By anguished hearts, raised everywhere,
Became th' oppressed one's daily prayer.

King Harold was ta'en to his long last rest,
In a tide-washed isle—at his own behest:
At dead of night his pall they bore,
Silent and sad to that lonely shore.

The grave was ready, the prayer was said,
The coffin was placed in its lowly bed;
The mourners gazed on the solemn rite,
When a piercing cry rang thro' the night:

" Harold! À l'aide, à l'aide, my king,"
And a half wild serf pushed thro' the ring,
Knelt by the open grave at once,
And silently waited the king's response.

" Who calls on the king calls not in vain,"
A voice thro' the welkin rang again.
" State forth thy wrong, what is thy need?
Though dead, King Harold will hear thy plead."

" My king, this land is mine," he said,
" My all; I ask but to be paid."
" And shalt be," spoke King Harold's son,
" For Harold, the King, does wrong to none."

And there in the night was the silver paid,
Ere Harold to rest in his grave was laid;
Then piled they the earth on his kingly head,
And left him to sleep in his lowly bed.

THE EARTHLY LOVE

Part I

THE angels tuned their harps of gold,
And struck the trembling strings;
Through endless courts the anthem rolled,
With clearest echoings.

A shining throng of spirits bright
Stood round the azure throne;
Bathed in the dew of Heaven's light,
Their wings like brilliants shone.

But one sweet seraph standing there,
Sang with the angel throng;
Yet plaintive was the sacred air
Which mingled with her song.

And on her beauteous cheek there fell
A pearly crystal tear;
The joys of Heaven might not dispel
A lingering memory dear.

Lest one she loved might never come,
To join that heavenly band;
Lest one dear soul might not be won,
At last, to reach that land.

"A boon, O Lamb of God"—she pled,
"A loved one's soul to save;
To still the grief his heart doth shed
Upon my earthly grave."

Permission! Hallelujahs rang
All down the golden plain;
In chords of joy the angels sang
A touching farewell strain.

The spirit swept with sudden flight
Through the gates of Paradise;
Swift as a star falls thro' the night,
Far back to earth she flies.

To bring the loved one calm and peace,
His sorrowing soul to soothe;
To bid his useless tears to cease,
His heart toward Heaven to move.

Part II

'Twas night, and round a banquet spread,
Had met the rich and fair;
Gay was the throng, and at its head
There sat a youthful pair.

For wine and mirth now ruled the hour,
Twixt song and music tost;
Forgotten was the mystic power,
The loved one, and the lost.

A fair young face was close to his,
Was bent, his words to hear;
Lest she, the love he spoke, might miss,
Poured in her listening ear.

Where was the love of yesterday?
The plighted troth, the vow?
Oh! for the truth of manhood, say,
Are they forgotten now?

The unseen seraph, standing there,
Had seen with glistening eye;
With saddened heart she watched the pair,
Then turned and soared on high

Back to the realms of endless day:
  Enough of earthly love!
How can the things of life repay
  For the heavenly joys above?

The love of man, like fleeting light,
  Is changeful as a dream;
While joys of Heaven flow ever bright,
  In an unending stream.

Home, home once more to ruby skies,
  Anew her flight she wings;
Again—once more in Paradise,
  Her song of rapture rings.

She tunes her golden harp again,
  No more with plaintive moan;
But holier is the seraph's strain
  Which floats towards the throne.

DRIFTING

DAY was ending, shadows blending: on the river dark and swift,
From the banks and boughs which bounded, as I brushed my bark adrift:
Nor oar nor helm it guiding, 'gainst gloom and mist colliding;
Coiling, climbing thro' a curtain, curled uncertain, then dividing.

And the setting sunbeam slanting in the shallow of the stream,
Glancing, glistened, gilded golden, grand with glory grew its gleam:
As long I listened languid—up the limpid lark's lays roll,
And the sweetness of its singing, swept the shadows from my soul.

The daylight deepened dimly: as the dawn of dark drew drear,

Day was ending, shadows blending: on the river dark and swift,
From the banks and boughs which bounded, as I brushed my bark adrift.

—Drifting, page 70.

Came a chant which chimed the carols thro' the
canopy; as clear
As, at early evening, echoes thro' the everglades
exclaim,
Pouring plenteous, passive peacefulness, pro-
foundly 'pon the plain.

The mystic meadows mocked me with melodious
music mild:
Lisped laughing leaves and listened, luring lan-
terns leaped and smiled;
In wanton whispers warbled—"We will wail
and weep and wait
Till the sirens shout their singing, and the storm
sea sobs his fate."

Nothing caring, all things daring, drifting
downwards in a dream;
So sliding swifter seaward, swept the swol'n and
sombre stream:
While the willows and the water and the winds
were wooing me—
Wishing, waiting for the wailing, of the wild
waves of the sea.

For, forever floating forward, far away from
fame and foe,
Little left of all life's longings, less of love and
least of woe;
May the morning meet me mirthsome, and the
mad, mis-shapen mist
Take me trusting to the tempest, to be tossed
where'er it list.

What for me remains of sorrow, what for me is
left of joy?
Naught will count upon the morrow: life, like
some forgotten toy
Will be laid aside and broken; vanished like a
summer's dream:
Leaving not a single token in the everlasting
stream.
Come then! wind and storm and water, rise and
shout your loud alarms!
Reckless of your strength to slaughter, come,
enfold me in your arms!

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN

UR Father in Heaven! We hallow
Thy Name:
O'er Earth, as on High, Thou ever
dost reign;
We pray that to us Thy peace may be given,
And Thy Will done by men, as by angels in
Heaven.
Oh! give us, this day, the bread that we need;
Forgive ev'ry trespass, in word and in deed;
Teach us to pardon each other, that we
May finally obtain forgiveness of Thee.
Oh! lead us away from the manifold snares
Which Temptation spreads for us, each day
unawares;
Oh! keep us from evil, of all hues whatever,
And Thine be the Power and Glory forever.

"ANYTHING TO BEAT GRANT"*

FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1872

NYTHING to beat Grant," anything to drag
The hero down who bravely bore aloft the Union flag,
While patriot souls were fainting, and exultant was the foe,
While waves of war beat wildly, and drenched the land in woe;
Who stayed the fiery tempest, with steadfast hand and heart,
Who rolled the billows back, and tore the clouds of gloom apart?

"Anything to beat Grant," anything to beat
The victor who would not exult upon the foe's defeat,

* The watchword of the combined Democratic and Liberal parties.—R. A. C.

But modestly who turned away from Richmond's fallen pride,
Refused like conquerors of old her bloody streets to stride;
But gave his promise to the foe, a pledge that war should cease,
And uttered, "We were brothers once: oh, let us now have peace."

"Anything to beat Grant," anything to blot
The record of his glowing name, on which there rests no spot;
To cover up with infamy his glorious career,
Oh! 'tis a noble deed for those who hold their country dear.
But vain the tonges of malice, for as the years roll on,
His fame will clearer, brighter grow, like that of Washington.

"Anything to beat Grant": say, brothers, will you join
The crew who would with impious hands Columbia's fame purloin?

The foe again is in the field; his battle cries
resound,
Come, comrades, to the rescue, for the field is
holy ground,
Raise high aloft our starry flag, and to the mil-
lions tell,
The ballot is our weapon now: oh! wield it strong
and well.

THE MAID WITH THE GOLDEN HAIR

Part I

AND oh! there is joy in the house to-night:
From turret and door stream floods of light,
And hurrying feet are hastening there,
To swell the crowd of the young and the fair.
The old man came with his locks of snow,
His trembling limbs, and his furrowed brow;
With bounding step came the village maid,
In tasteful robes of white arrayed.
And happiness reigns in the hearts of all,
At the bridal feast in the stately hall;
For dearly they loved the wedded pair,
And the bride was the maid with the golden hair.

Amidst the throng, like a spirit bright,
With a blushing cheek, and an eye whose light

L. of C.

Was sweetly dimmed by the pearly tear
Of joy and peace which lingered there,
She stood in her robes of spotless white:
Unseen at her side was an angel bright.
But the feast begins, and the music's note
The silence of the still night broke;
And louder, and longer, swells the strain,
And the echoes take up the theme again;
The distant hills repeat the air,
In praise of the maid with the golden hair.

Part II

And oh! there is grief in the house to-night,
And the curtains are drawn, and pale and white
Are the faces of those who went and came
From that sorrowful bed of youthful pain.
With tearful eyes, and whispered tones,
And hearts which echoed the stifled moans
Of him who crushed by the bitter woe
Of a wilder grief than they could know.
But the spirit of light is standing near,
And whispers " Come " in the maiden's ear;
Two angels are leaving the house of despair,
And one is the maid with the golden hair.

Beneath the willows, far out in the night,
With the gale to soothe, and the moon to light;
And the quiet stars to watch her tomb,
And over it flowers to fade and bloom,
And loved ones to utter her cherished name,
Through years to pass, and come again:
She sleeps in peace 'neath her marble pall,
Awaiting the blast of the trumpet call
Which shall open the grave, roll back the stone,
And Christ shall call His loved ones home:
And joy and peace shall evermore there,
Belong to the maid with the golden hair.

WOOD-FIRE FANCIES

ITHOUT the wild storm whistles,
And on the frozen street
There falls a blinding, icy cloud
Of piercing hail and sleet.

The night is dark and wintry,
And downward in its path
The rising gale, with mighty strength,
Sweeps on in fitful wrath.

Beside the blazing fireside
My easy-chair I draw,
Safe from the battling elements,
And listen to their roar.

The wind howls wild with anguish,
Then moans as if in pain;
Then roars again, as tho' it found
Its supplications vain.

The flames shoot up with sudden glare,
As dying embers fall;
The shadows flit in ghostly dance
Upon my chamber wall.

How long I sat I know not,
Gazing, staring, in the fire,
In a dreamy trance that seemed
As though 'twould never tire.

And the hours still kept striking,
Till I lost them in the night;
And the fire still kept burning,
With a strangely lurid light.

Wreaths of smoke were upward cresting,
Floating like a misty fog;
And now and then a face seemed peering
From behind a blackened log.

And from out the glowing embers,
Spirit forms and phantoms swept;
Springing from their hot embraces,
As the forked flames upward leapt.

All at once the room seemed peopled
With a strange and motley crew
Of spectres unfamiliar,
And shapes I never knew.

They marched in serried compact,
They swam upon the air;
They wandered round in circles,
And floated everywhere.

Then suddenly they vanished,
And bluer burnt the fire;
While heavenly music filled the room,
As from an unseen lyre.

And all around me drifted
A misty cloud of light,
Entrancing all my senses
With a strange yet sweet delight.

Soon, in the gauze-like vapor,
A shadowy form there grew,
Clearer growing every instant,
Till before my raptured view

Stood a female form seraphic,
One of a heavenly race:
Serenity, and wondrous power,
Stamped on a marble face.

Her garments flowing round her,
Like waves of moonlight were;
Exquisite was the perfume
Which bathed and filled the air.

A snowy arm extended,
A wand of crystal raised;
And from its gleaming silver point
A priceless jewel blazed.

What art thou, wondrous spirit?
My soul sought to inquire;
Canst thou be that devouring thing,
The element called Fire?

The spring of joy and beauty,
Of heat and light the source;
Parent alike of death and life,
What makes thy wondrous force?

Then—with a start I waken'd,
Which put my dreams to rout;
And I found, as explanation,
That the fire had gone out.

The moon was brightly shining,
The stars shone still on high,
But in the East an orange tint
Was lighting up the sky.

Yet I'll dream that dream again,
On some other winter's night;
And I'll claim the answer then,
From that spirit form of light.

I will pile the embers on,
To last quite thro' my naps;
And the secrets which I learn,
I'll tell to you,—perhaps!

MONOTONY

DAY after day shines forth the golden sun,
Night after night the twinkling stars appear;
In endless course the seasons go and come,
And winter blights the fields in every year.

The river toward the sea runs swiftly on,
And mingles with its depths with ceaseless tide;
The ocean rears its cresting waves, upon
Whose bosom sweeps the storm with giant stride.

The earth goes plunging down a trackless space,
The planets in their tireless course have trod;
And all the stars join in the endless race,
Through the vast universal heaven of God.

And hoary Time looks on, and from his throne
Drops cycles from his hand, as on the sea
Fall drops of rain; and these are drawn
To the insatiate bosom of Eternity:

Far through the fading visions of the past,
  Far down the dim and misty ages gone,
Grown gray with endless centuries, as vast
  As the grand train of ages yet to come.

And what art thou, O vain and boastful man,
  So self-reliant in thy puny might?
The life which beats in thy weak frame began
  But yesterday; 'twill take its flight to-night.

Thou lookest o'er the everlasting field;
  'Tis mine, thou say'st! Oh, poor and vain
    deceit;
Thy father and thy father's sire did yield
  The same delusion, proved it but a cheat.

How thine? for, see, the vaunting words have left
  Thy lips a moment, e'er thou turnest pale;
Of life and field in one short hour bereft,
  And rumbling wheels wind up the cypress vale.

And yet the patient field remains, to mock,
  And laugh a thousand title deeds to scorn;
Smiles in the summer sun; the winter's shock
  Outbraves, until the resurrection's morn.

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